



SENATOR

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E-Newsletter - 10th District

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10th Legislative District

January 16, 2009

2009 LEGISLATURE — WEEK ONE

As the Legislature gathered this week, I once again had the honor of taking my oath of office as your state senator. I also had the privilege of having so many of my family members in attendance as we kicked off the start of our 2009 session. My family, friends and constituents have given me so much support during my time as your Senator that I can't even begin to describe how much I appreciate it.

ALASKAN WAY VIADUCT

The governor made big news on Tuesday with her announcement that a deep-bore tunnel design has been selected to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. I am very encouraged that a plan is in place to provide a safe and reliable transportation corridor through downtown Seattle, and am optimistic that this design choice can be constructed with less interference to the surrounding community.

Of course, any project of this size could never be fully funded by a single source and — like other major transportation projects around Washington — rebuilding the Viaduct will require a partnership between the state and local governments to pool their resources together.

Ferry riders have been asked to pay an increasing share of the cost of their transportation over the last few years, and the state's most recent transportation mega-project, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, is being financed with tolls. Last year the Legislature established a policy for the inclusion of tolling on transportation mega-projects in Washington — and I believe the plan for replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct, like all major transportation projects in our state, will include some form of user financing.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Finding ways to stimulate our economy is one of my top priorities for this year, and I'm excited to join my colleagues in a bold plan they've developed to get the ball rolling.

On Tuesday we announced an agenda that focuses on investing in the talent and job skills of Washington workers, easing regulatory burdens to encourage entrepreneurship, and providing the infrastructure needed to stimulate new jobs and economic development.

These ideas include proposals to reduce the burden of paperwork on small businesses, provide local communities with the financing tools they need to build infrastructure like roads and sewers that are needed to attract new

businesses, and improving the coordination of work-study programs between our technical schools and universities and the emerging high-tech businesses that will lead the way in the economy of the future.

I'll be providing you with more details on these and other things that I'm working on to improve our economy and create jobs as they develop.

GOOD DIGESTION

Last year I sponsored [Senate Bill 6806](#) to provide a six year property and leasehold excise tax exemption to farmers who invest in anaerobic digesters: machines that compost — or “digest” — organic waste in a machine that limits access to oxygen. Farms and ranches can use anaerobic digesters to recover methane from animal manure for producing electricity, heat, and hot water. The process destroys methane — a potent greenhouse gas — and can greatly reduce manure odor.

This week I attended my first meeting as a new member of the [Senate Agriculture & Rural Economic Development Committee](#), and took the opportunity to encourage my colleagues to ease regulatory restrictions on the use of food by-products in anaerobic digesters that run primarily on cow manure.

It turns out that these incredibly efficient devices can be even more productive – and economically viable for farmers – if they toss some food waste in with the cow patties, but there are some silly rules on the books that need to be taken care of before that can happen.

Once again, Skagit County residents Daryl and Kevin Maas of Farm Power Northwest appeared to offer testimony on how anaerobic digesters work and why we need some changes to current regulations to make them more economically advantageous to ranchers and farmers.

Right now manure is regulated as a dairy nutrient under the Department of Agriculture, which is an agency that farmers are accustomed to dealing with. But current regulations also say that adding any recycled food waste from off the farm into the manure means it's considered 100 percent solid waste that is subject to extensive regulation by the Department of Ecology.

All our farmers and ranchers want is a chance to use this technology in a way that doesn't cause them to spend more time filling out paperwork for another government agency. For them, like other businesspeople, time is money – which is why I'm going to push to get these regulations changed.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Our state constitution requires the Legislature to convene for a regular session on the second Monday in January. In odd-numbered years like this one we have 105 consecutive days — including weekends and holidays — to draft the state's two-year operating and capital budgets, as well as passing all of the other legislation necessary to provide the essential public services that keep our communities safe and prosperous.

I've already been busy as the chairwoman of the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) — I'll be holding four two-hour meetings per week to update the state transportation budget, make reforms to Washington State Ferries, and improve the safety and efficiency of our entire statewide highway system.

I'll also be attending regular meetings each week as a member of the [Senate Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Committee](#) to help make sure that farming and rural communities in our state get the resources they need to continue their valuable contributions to our state economy.

When I'm not busy with committee hearings, I'll be busy with a variety of other legislative duties — including meeting with staff, stakeholders and constituents to get their input on legislation that we're considering. Meeting with citizens and community leaders who are visiting the Legislature to have their opinions heard is one of my top priorities, along with keeping you informed about everything that I'm doing on your behalf.

DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED — BUT WE'RE STILL HERE TO HELP

I want to remind you once again that my district office in Oak Harbor has temporarily closed so that my staff can focus on our work in Olympia while the Legislature is in session — it will re-open after the Legislature adjourns in April.

My executive assistant Nova Gattman, legislative assistant Gina Bull and intern Beau Perschbacher are available to provide constituent services to the people of our community, so please contact us with questions or concerns whether they involve bills before the Legislature or topics you feel are being overlooked.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618**. If you have a concern, I want to hear it.

In the meantime, please visit my webpage for up-to-date info on what's happening at the Legislature.

Until next week — Take Care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

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